CONTRA COSTA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES

I. DEPARTMENT MANDATE MISSION

A. MANDATE

Established by legislative authority, the Child Support Enforcement Program was authorized under Title IV-D of the Social Security Act to provide services assisting parents to meet their mutual obligation to support their children. Established in 1975, the program is a joint Federal, State and local partnership involving separate state systems, each with its own unique laws and procedures.

In California, child support reform legislation signed in 1999 by Governor Davis created the Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) in 2000. The new department was directed to provide leadership and oversight to develop a statewide automation system, while ensuring uniformity of service for families throughout the State. This goal was accomplished in 2007 through the development of a new case management system, CCSAS, California Child Support Automation System. CCSAS was implemented in Contra Costa County in March 2008. Every county has a local child support agency providing child support services on behalf of the State of California. The Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) is the Contra Costa County agency responsible for providing child support services and enforcement.

No cost services to Contra Costa County residents with physical custody of a minor include:

- Establishing paternity
- Locating absent parents
- Establishing court orders for paternity, child and medical support
- Enforcing court orders for child, family and medical support
- Collecting and distributing support payments
- Maintaining accounts of payments paid and payments due
- Modifying court orders when appropriate

B. MISSION STATEMENT

The Contra Costa County Department of Child Support Services promotes the well-being of children and the self-sufficiency of families by delivering effective child support services to help meet the financial, medical and emotional needs of children.

II. DEPARTMENT DATA

BUDGET: \$18,456,062

FTE: 150

OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY	FILLED POSITIONS		
Officials and Administrators	3		
Professionals	19		
Technicians	86		
Administrative Support	42		

ETHNICITY	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	PERCENT
WHITE	11	68	79	52.7%
BLACK	3	20	23	15.3%
HISPANIC	7	17	24	16.0%
ASIAN	4	5	9	6.0%
NATIVE HAWAIIAN/PACIFIC ISLANDER	0	1	1	0.6%
FILIPINO	6	6	12	8.0%
AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKAN NATIVE	1	1	2	1.3%
TOTAL	32	118	150	100.0%
	21.3%	78.7%	100.0%	

III. MAJOR PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

Contra Costa County's Department of Child Support Services is committed to delivering outstanding service using state of the art technology, modern communications methods, and streamlined business processes. Each functional area of the department is composed of several teams of child support professionals that interface to deliver seamless customer service.

The five department functional areas are responsible for a wide range of duties:

A. ADMINISTRATION/SUPPORT

Management
Business Administration
Systems Support

Administration is responsible for the overall management of the department. The Management team provides leadership and direction to ensure program compliance. Business administration is responsible for fiscal management, including budgets, purchasing, contracts administration and payroll, human resources, including recruitment, personnel and labor relations. Systems Support provides information technology (I.T.) support for a complex networking environment with more than 25 different software applications. Systems Support also provides I.T. leadership to streamline work and increase work efficiencies through the use of technology.

B. PRE-ORDER/PUBLIC SERVICE

Intake Establishment Drop-Ins Family Law Facilitator

Intake is responsible for the initial processing of child support applications and service requests received from Employment and Human Services Department, including verifying the information that has been provided and conducting additional research to locate incomplete information. Establishment works to establish court orders, including locating income and asset information, calculating the amount of support to be collected and distributed and locating absent parents. Drops-Ins handles the in person contact with customers that visit our office. This unit handles requests for information, receives and processes child support payments, receives and tracks initial case referrals, collects, secures and confirms case information and provides direction to customers for the next appropriate action for their case. Working in conjunction with the Superior Court, the department has a Family Law Facilitator on site. The Family Law Facilitator provides customer assistance with legal forms and provides procedural information about the court process. The Family Law Facilitator can also assist customers with filing motions and provides referrals for legal services and educational workshops.

C. LEGAL SERVICES /ATTORNEYS

Legal Resolution Legal Support Legal Processing Attorneys

The Legal Services division works to establish or modify court orders through the legal process. Legal support is responsible for coordinating genetic testing to establish paternity and processing and serving summons and complaints, including processing responses and maintaining the proofs of service. Legal processing is responsible for processing and serving court documents to our

customers, filing summons and complaints documents with the Court System and providing legal clerical support in the court room. During the court preparation process, the Legal Resolution team works to establish court orders through the stipulation process, where the parties of the cases work to negotiate a mutually acceptable agreement for support, thereby avoiding the time and process of a court appearance. Legal Resolution staff also attend court to work with customers and support the attorneys. Attorneys handle all court appearances, provide legal opinions and/or legal interpretations for staff and prepare court documents.

D. CLIENT SERVICES POST ORDER

Operational Teams

The Client Services Post Order division handles all actions on child support cases with established orders with the goal of collecting consistent support payments. Three Operational teams are collectively responsible for these duties. These duties include working with the parties of the case to ensure that payments are made in accordance with the court order, utilizing the case management tool to work cases to optimize current collections, collecting payments on arrears balances, reviewing and adjusting accounts and if appropriate facilitating stipulations. Enforcement also handles all interstate cases and closes cases when appropriate.

E. INTERNAL SUPPORT

Document Processing
Fiscal
Training and Special Projects

The Internal Support division is responsible for activities which support the other divisions. Document Processing is responsible for processing all incoming mail by scanning, indexing, and electronically routing it to the appropriate person or team to be worked. Fiscal is responsible for handling all of the child support accounts. These duties include activating new court orders and establishing the appropriate accounts, performing account adjustments and audits, and closing accounts when necessary. Fiscal also serves as a liaison with the State Disbursement Unit, processing payments at the local level, handling stop payments, researching and resolving funds held in suspense and resolving customer service concerns regarding payments. Training and Special Projects is responsible for providing training support for all staff members, including an intensive 9 week classroom training for all newly hired child support specialists and the creation and delivery of new training programs as needed. This team is also responsible for making sure that staff use the case management system correctly by working state created reports.

IV. ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Ending Caseload 30,612 Total Collections \$62,090,701

The Intake team processed 15,281 applications and service requests resulting in opening 4995 new cases. The Intake team continues to use the recently developed inhouse Service Request Assignment Tool, and has remained in compliance with the timeframe requirements associated to the case opening process.

In 2012, 8,185 customers came into the department, 14.75% of customers Spanish is their primary language. The average wait time for a customer to be seen was 6.27 minutes. The Jobview Kiosk continues to be a resource in the lobby to customers who are searching for jobs. Last year there were 2,264 customers who made use of the kiosk. On February 1, 2012 the department entered into a shared services agreement with Butte County Department of Child Support Services to handle the incoming phone calls for Contra Costa. This agreement has proven to be a quality and cost-effective customer service solution. Call center costs were \$1.5 million and have been substantially reduced, which enabled the movement of staff to then reduce caseload size for our caseworkers. Ensuring excellent customer service to the public we serve. During this Federal Fiscal Year over 66,000 calls were successfully handled with an average wait time of just under two minutes.

The Legal Services and attorneys appeared in court on 3,042 child support cases. The department enhanced the support order establishment and court preparation process to include a process to reach out to the parties to discuss reaching an agreement prior to going to court. The number of stipulated agreements achieved department-wide has gone up from 834 to 1116. A 34% increase compared to last year.

The fiscal team successful adapted to a new Statewide Distribution Unit vendor with a new system for the collection and distribution of child support payments. They also reviewed 2085 cases to ensure that interest was being properly calculated. The fiscal team audits an average of 110 cases per month.

The document processing team continues to be a model mailroom with the use of a mail extractor and computer imaging workflow. The extractor is able to open, scan and prepare the mail for indexing in a very quick single employee process. The volume of mail being processed annually is over 100,000 pieces of mail.

The call center services were recently transferred to Butte County. This transition has increased the number of staff available for enforcement duties and resulting in smaller caseloads. The average caseload was 2100 per worker and is now 1100 per worker. Lower caseloads have led to enhanced customer service and a greater ability to manage the cases. Focused projects on arrears collections resulted in lowering uncollected arrears by \$2.3 million.

The California Child Support Payment Services (CACCSPS) project (which Contra Costa leads) continues to increase the rate of collections on new cases with new monetary support orders from 74.65% in 2011 to 89.35% in 2012.

To assist in increasing current support collections, the Department implemented the Smith/Ostler Program. It enables the enforcement of orders in cases where child and/or spousal support orders include a base support amount plus additional support from bonuses, commissions and income earned over a set amount. In the past, only the base support amounts could be enforced. With some creativity and a hands-on approach, the additional support orders can be enforced too. There are currently 46 cases in the program with collections of over \$30,000 in additional support that would not have been collected otherwise.

The training team provided a nine-week training class to twenty-one new child support specialists, and numerous training classes to existing staff. They employed some new technology in the classes, an electronic assessment tool to ensure that the trainees were mastering the new skills and electronic surveys to determine the effectiveness of the training. Nine new Child Support Assistants also benefited from this technology.

The System Support Team (SST) provided subject matter expertise and was a driving force behind statewide implementation of an interface between The Work Number (Equifax's payroll verification service) and the statewide Child Support Enforcement system. The interface enhances the receipt of employer data on child support cases. To expand capabilities and offerings in mobile computing, SST purchased and installed wireless LAN access points throughout the office, and is experimenting with various mobile computing devices.

An electronic Paternity Opportunity Program (POP) mobile solution is completing phase one design and beginning initial testing with the Contra Costa Regional Medical Center (CCRMC). The POP program gives unmarried parents the opportunity to declare parentage of a child, without genetic testing or going to court, using a Paternity Declaration that is legally binding. Typically the POP declarations are obtained in the hospitals after the birth of a baby. A four part NCR form is completed by hand and returned by postal mail. The process is slow and error prone. DCSS and CCRMC have collaborated for the last two years to develop an electronic paternity declaration on a tablet computer which we call e-POP. The Pilot project is nearing completion and is expected to begin "proof-of-concept" testing by summer.

Contra Costa continues to be seen as a leader in the child support business. The management staff spoke at nine conference sessions and wrote five articles for professional publications throughout the year.

The department ran a three month BART ad campaign in the Contra Costa stations to educate the general public about Child Support Services. In addition, a summer advertising campaign ran in six of the largest movie theaters in Contra Costa on a total

of 75 screens, prior to every movie for a total of 2100 spots a week. These theaters have an average total monthly attendance of 268,022.

In conjunction with the Family Law Section of the Contra Costa County Bar Association, the department's attorneys hosted a workshop to raise awareness of the department's services. This training "A Workshop Exploring Everything Attorneys Need to Know About DCSS" was attended by approximately 60 family law attorneys.

The department has partnered with Rubicon, a community based organization, whose mission is to work with low-income individuals to help them overcome barriers to financial independence. Monthly presentations are given to the Rubicon participants to educate them about the department's services. DCSS staff works with participants to reduce child support barriers that may prevent them from succeeding in the Rubicon program.

Department staff participated in a number of outreach events such as Homeless Connect and the Midnight Basketball League.

V. CHALLENGES

A. INTERNAL TO DEPARTMENT

Maintain high case management performance levels to achieve the mandated federal performance measures.

A continued focus on increasing the number of in-house stipulated agreements to reduce the number of cases on the court calendar and to help offset the reduction of court days (due to the reduction in court funding).

Create a process to hold non-paying jobless parents accountable for searching for work.

Explore an alternate case management strategy to segment the cases based on the parent's ability and willingness to pay.

B. INTERNAL TO THE COUNTY

The salary reductions are having an impact on department staffing levels as staff leave to go to other counties for greater pay.

C. EXTERNAL TO COUNTY OPERATIONS

Increase child support services to families by promoting services through partnerships, outreach, marketing, and social media.

VI. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The federal department of child support has established performance measures for each state in the country. Each state then establishes goals for each individual county. Below is a side by side comparison of Contra Costa Department of Child Support Services' performance with that of the State of California. Contra Costa County DCSS has consistently outperformed the State of California average.

Contra Costa County	FFY 2009	FFY 2010	FFY 2011	FFY 2012
Cases with Support Orders Established	89.2%	88.5%	89.90%	90.3%
Collections of Current Support Due	55.1%	58.1%	59.80%	63.0%
Collections on Cases with Arrears	63.9%	64.0%	65.30%	66.6%
Cost Effectiveness	\$3.23	\$3.19	\$3.25	\$3.33
Declared Paternity	102.3%	114.5%	115.5%	111.0%

Statewide Average	FFY 2009	FFY 2010	FFY 2011	FFY 2012
Cases with Support Orders Established	78.8%	82.5%	85.80%	87.9%
Collections of Current Support Due	53.4%	56.0%	58.60%	61.4%
Collections on Cases with Arrears	59.4%	60.3%	61.60%	63.5%
Cost Effectiveness	\$2.10	\$2.38	\$2.29	\$2.47
Declared Paternity	97.3%	102.8%	100.0%	98.4%







